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Conflict in the Modern Middle East: An Encyclopedia of Civil War, Revolutions, and Regime Change

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fiction, and short fiction—provide a historical overview of major contributors, and the genre form in the context of the African American experience. Summaries are signed and written by a mix of academics and independent scholars. **VERDICT** Comprehensive and useful for a variety of audiences.—**Robert Mixner, Bartholomew Cty. P.L., Columbus, IN**

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Conflict in the Modern Middle East: An Encyclopedia of Civil War, Revolutions, and Regime Change. ABC-CLIO. Mar. 2020. 409p. ed. by Jonathan K. Zartman. ISBN 9781440865022. \$97. REF

Zartman (Dept. of Research, Air Command and Staff Coll.) offers general readers a laudable look at the 2011 Arab

Spring protests and their resulting consequences, which swept all 22 states in the Middle East as well as bordering North African areas. Also addressed are the 2005 Cedar Revolution in Lebanon and Iran's 2009 Green Revolution. Featuring approximately 250 short entries from 73 prominent scholars in 17 countries, the work provides cogent explanations about

ereviews

Gale Presents: Udemy
Gale; gale.com/elearning/udemy
Free trial available

■ *By Rob Tench*

CONTENT First developed in 2010, Udemy is a large online learning platform offering courses in a variety of subjects for students seeking to sharpen their personal and professional skills. Currently, 57,000 instructors teach 150,000 courses in 65 languages to more than 50 million students.

The company recently partnered with Gale to offer 4,000 virtual classes to public library users. Courses are arranged in 13 major categories: cloud computing, data science, design, development, finance and accounting, IT operations, leadership management, marketing, office productivity, personal development, project management and operations, sales, and workplace and human development. Within these categories are 75-plus subareas. More offerings in the disciplines of computing, business, and personal development make this database similar to LinkedIn Learning, another popular online website with a substantial catalog of instruction in business, creativity, and technology.

Approximately 85 percent of the collection has been updated in the past two years. Courses are added and replaced monthly with new material on emerging and high-demand topics. All classes are accessible via IOS and Android apps, podcasts, Chromecast, and Apple TV.

USABILITY The layout on the landing page is clean; clicking the prominent “categories” tab at the top displays the 13 major areas of coverage. Below this top level, eight of the 13 general categories are listed horizontally across the screen. A large basic search box also appears at the top of the screen; advanced search options or a general list of all courses with links on the homepage would have made finding a class simpler and more



intuitive. At the bottom of the page, users will find links to the app (available through Google Play and the Apple App Store), as well as a Sitemap option providing links to local homepages, popular topics, popular tutorials, and free resources.

Other features on the homepage include courses on related topics, courses that people are viewing, newest courses on the platform, and top courses in the general categories in which users have enrolled.

After enrolling, users can find their classes by clicking on the “my courses” tag, which lists both current and archived classes. Whenever returning users log in, they are greeted with a “welcome back” message with large icons of their enrolled classes.

On the main page of each class, users will find a course description and outline, requirements and prerequisites, ratings and reviews by former students, and a biography of the instructor. Learning outcomes, instructor expectations, and course content are clearly delineated.

For instance, selecting the “development” category from the landing page, then “game design” yields a page with “courses to get me started,” “most popular courses,” “trending courses,” and “popular topics.” Users can filter classes by “topics,” “level,” “features,” “ratings,” “video duration,” and “closed captioned.” Under “all game development courses,” users will find several selections, including the course “Unity Game Development: Make Professional 3D Games.” The “enroll now” button offers a video introduction to the course. Users can then continue the class in lesson-plan order or jump to another section.

Doing a search for “virtual meetings” yields more than 700 course options, including “How To Manage & Influence Your Virtual Team,” which is targeted to all levels

and three hours long, with 38 lectures and an overall rating of 4.4 [out of five?] by more than 4,000 people; 15,000-plus students had been enrolled as of May 2020.

Under “personal development” and “health & fitness,” users will find “Yoga Flexibility Challenge: 15 Minutes X 15 Days,” with a 4.7 rating and more than 2,600 students (as of May 2020).

Similar LinkedIn Learning classes on game design, virtual meetings, and yoga are higher quality in terms of instructional delivery and course content, though Gale Presents: Udemy instructors are also engaging; the video and audio quality are first-rate, and the courses are highly praised. On both platforms, transcripts, closed captioning, and multiple viewing options are the norm, with students having the option to complete sections and entire courses at their pace.

Gale Presents: Udemy’s navigation is one of its best features. Users can seamlessly toggle between classes or jump from one class to another. The resource also identifies similar classes that may be of interest. Ease of enrollment, in-depth details about courses, and the lack of time constraints for completing courses are also strengths.

However, discoverability of classes from the homepage could be more seamless. An advanced search feature with Boolean capabilities located by the basic search box and a detailed course listing with links would be helpful enhancements.

PRICING Costs start at \$2,500 and are based on population served. A free trial for the product can be requested at gale.com/elearning/udemy.

VERDICT Gale Presents: Udemy’s course content and selection make it a viable instructional option for patrons looking to improve their computer skills and business acumen. Libraries considering this product should also explore other learning platforms such as LinkedIn Learning, Universal Class, and Skillshare, particularly LinkedIn Learning, which is similar to Gale Presents: Udemy in scope, presentation, and features.

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Islam and the various economic, social, and cultural forces that not only propelled the region into conflict but continue to influence the areas today. In addition to these broad regional topics, there are entries on country-specific profiles of the most significant personalities during that time, and snapshots of those who gained prominence as a result of the uprisings. An

extended chronology of important events, “see also” references, lists of further reading for each entry, and a select general bibliography of core resources are valuable tools. Nine primary documents, such as the “Arab Peace Initiative” of 2002 provide insight into attempts at resolving the conflict. This resource adroitly highlights the tensions and challenges brought on

by the divergent monetary, philosophical, political, and religious differences in the Middle East over the past two decades. **VERDICT** A thorough introduction to the Arab Spring with succinct and informative overviews of countries, cultures, and people most affected by the developments and outcomes.—**Rob Tench, Old Dominion Univ. Libs., Norfolk, VA**

Nineteenth Century Literary Society: The John Murray Publishing Archive

Adam Matthew Digital;
amdigital.co.uk/primary-sources/
nineteenth-century-literary-society

■ *By Grisel Dominguez*

CONTENT Adam Matthew Digital’s Nineteenth Century Literary Society: The John Murray Publishing Archive provides access to more than 1,400 primary source materials published by the John Murray publishing company, dating back to its founding in 1768 through the 19th century. Researchers will find here the historically significant literary works published by the company, such as the *Quarterly Review* and Jane Austen’s *Emma*, as well as advertisements, sales records, and documents tracing the history of works from conception to final product.

The collection also features the most complete selection of works by the English poet Lord Byron, including personal and published materials. Rare documents such as Austen’s correspondence and the first completed edition of Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* can be found here, too.

The archive is arranged into six themed collections: Business and Finance; Literature and Poetry; Politics, Society, and Religion; Private and Domestic Life; the Sciences; and Travel and the World. Short introductions for each theme detail relevant documents and the significance of the theme within both the archive and the literary landscape of the 19th century.

Documents can be filtered by 30 key figures, including poet Byron, explorer David Livingstone, novelists Sir Walter Scott and Austen, writer and historian Washington Irving, Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, archaeologist and art historian Austen Henry Layard, travel writer Isabella Bird, and writer Lady Caroline Lamb.

The archive’s editorial board is composed of scholars and academics who provide feedback on selections and interviews, essays, and other materials to inform the use of the content. Selections are made with guidance and help from staff from the Na-

tional Library of Scotland and academic board members with expertise in areas such as book history, romantic literature, historical geography, exploration, and scientific history.

Works are exclusive to the John Murray Archive at the National Library of Scotland, making it a unique literary resource; however, some materials have been excluded, including works that fall outside the scope of the collection, works that are openly accessible, items with copyright restrictions, and materials for which privacy and data protection are in question.

USABILITY Featuring a basic search bar, quick links, and a menu of options, the archive’s welcome page is easy to navigate and explore. Users can quickly find an introduction to the archive and its collections, explore documents and key figures, and access research tools. Meanwhile, the “quick links” menu provides one-click access to the “nature and scope” of the collection, a video introduction, a direct link to the Byron Papers, insight on the handwritten text recognition (HTR) software enabling a searchable text function, essays on the collection, and a series of overviews on the life cycle of selected works, such as Byron’s *Don Juan*.



An advanced search option is also available, as well as a search directories section (also found under research tools). The three directories include keywords (a curated list of terms such as *accounts*, *bookselling*, and *fame and scandal*), people (a list of figures arranged alphabetically by last name), and library collection (including correspondence by John Murray and the Byron Papers).

Advanced search allows users to conduct multiple, simultaneous queries; apply the word stemming option; and filter by date, theme, document type, and key figures. Users can also limit the results to “documents” or “secondary

resources” and access a list of previous searches.

By default, search results are based on resources that contain all queried keywords. Results can be sorted by “title,” “date range,” “theme,” “document type,” or “key figures.” Users can save searches to their archive or email results and limit results to HTR documents.

Researchers can also explore the archive via the “documents” section, which lets them browse by “theme,” “key figures,” or “document type” or access “list view,” which lays out all the materials in the collection. When using the documents section, there is also the ability to refine by document type (advertisement, correspondence, diary, etc.), theme, and/or key figures.

Users can review a selected document by page thumbnails or use the document reader to navigate between pages. Users can also search inside a document, download images or chapters, and add pages to the personal lightbox. Each document is accompanied by a detailed record listing title, date, document type, theme, description, keywords, people, and more, as well as a list of chapters in the text. Citation information is also provided, along with the option to export citations to EndNote, RefWorks, or Zotero.

PRICING Fees are determined by a range of factors that influence the size of potential user group, including but not limited to Carnegie Classification and full-time enrollment. Contact info@amdigital.co.uk for more information about the pricing for your institution.

VERDICT With access to the most complete collection of works by Lord Byron, and primary sources detailing the development of major 19th-century literary titles, scientific writings, and sociopolitical commentary, plus exclusive access to content from the National Library of Scotland’s John Murray Archive (featuring material that covers more than two centuries of the publishing firm’s history), this collection stands out from similar archives to provide a rare research opportunity that goes beyond literary studies to cover the history of the book, publishing as an industry, and the various social aspects associated with the period.

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